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GET ROAD READY

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TEENS.ORG

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO SAFELY EASE TEENS INTO DRIVING

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FACTS PARENTS AND TEENS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT DRIVING



- Motor vehicle crashes are the number one killer of teens.¹
- One out of every five 16 year-olds will be involved in a motor vehicle crash.²
- More than 300,000 teen passengers and drivers, ages 16-20, were injured and nearly 6,000 died as a result of vehicle crashes in 2002.³
- 36% of all teen driving deaths are alcohol related.⁴
- Teens are less likely than other drivers to wear seat belts.⁵

This shocking reality is due mostly to two factors — driver inexperience and level of maturity behind the wheel. With so many teens being injured or killed on our nation's roadways, teen driving safety has become a national priority and a top concern for parents according to a survey recently commissioned by DaimlerChrysler.⁶

ROAD READY TEENS IS AS EASY AS...

READY to teach your teen to drive?
Implement *Road Ready Teens* in your home.

SET the driving ground rules, and enter into a
Parent-Teen Road Rules Contract.
(Find it on page 11 and online at www.roadreadyteens.org.)

GO online to www.roadreadyteens.org with your
teen and check out the *Road Ready StreetWise*
video game.



ACTUAL SCREENS FROM THE ROAD READY STREETWISE VIDEO GAME

ROAD READY TEENS

Road Ready Teens offers a simple set of steps for parents to implement in the home to help ease teens into driving. Based on research and principles advocated by the nation's top safety organizations, the program's tips and tools help teens gain driving experience and maturity behind the wheel *before* tackling high-risk driving situations.

Road Ready Teens recommendations build upon laws that are already on the books in most states, as well as on the skills and principles teens often learn in driver education courses.

The *Road Ready Teens* program guides parents on how to incorporate proven, lifesaving strategies into their teens' beginning driving stages.



[Vehicle crashes
are the number one
killer of teens.]

THE ROLE OF PARENTS...

Sure, parents want teens to have their freedom, and teen drivers can be helpful when it comes to family driving responsibilities. But teens first need to become *safe* drivers, which requires practice and experience.

Research shows that when parents take an active role in their teens' driving education and set certain driving guidelines, their teens' chances of being in a crash can be reduced by up to one-third.⁷ Reducing teens' chances of being in a crash helps protect their lives and prevents costly medical bills and increased insurance rates.

AS A PARENT YOU CAN:

Implement *Road Ready Teens* in your home.

☐ Make sure your teen is “road ready” by reviewing the recommendations and personalizing the *Parent-Teen Road Rules Contract* with your teen. Also, require your teen to log on to www.roadreadyteens.org to play *Road Ready StreetWise*, a state-of-the-art video game that is challenging, exciting and helps teens better understand the risks they face in their early driving years.

Talk with your teen about the privilege of driving and the risks that come with being behind the wheel. By knowing and understanding those risks, teens are one step closer to becoming safer drivers.

Know the laws.

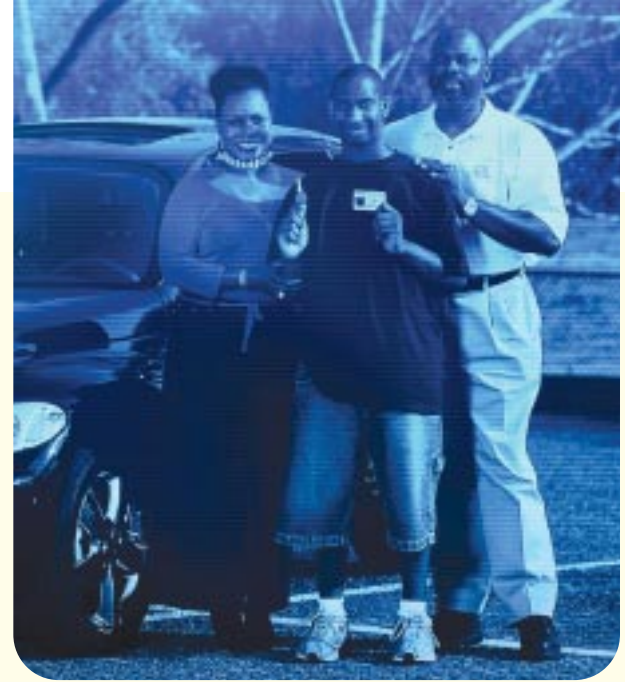
☐ The *Road Ready Teens* program builds on the laws in most states. Make sure you and your teen know your state’s laws for young drivers. Those who are unsure can visit *Road Ready Teens* online at www.roadreadyteens.org to link to their state’s drivers licensing Web site.

Be a good role model.

☐ Teens look to their parents for guidance and as role models behind the wheel. Teach your teen to be a safer driver by modeling safe driving. Follow all traffic laws and always buckle up in the front and back.

Choose the right vehicle for teen drivers.

☐ Turn to the experts for advice or more information, visit www.aaapublicaffairs.com or www.nhtsa.dot.gov.



KNOW THE RISKS AND START EARLY...

Teen crashes can be prevented. Studies prove that many teen crashes are caused by distractions such as other teens in the vehicle, talking on cell phones, listening to loud music or eating and drinking. Alcohol and speeding also are factors in many teen crashes. Another risk is a lack of experience driving at night and in adverse weather, when visibility is reduced and reaction time is slowed.

[Research shows that when parents take an active role in their teens' driving education and set certain driving guidelines, their teens' chances of being in a crash can be reduced by up to one-third.]

Buckle Up!

Data shows that the most effective way to reduce the chance of death or injury in a crash is by using a seat belt.⁸

Unfortunately, teens have the lowest rate of seat belt use when compared with other age groups.⁹ Therefore, it's important that you communicate to your teen that seat belt use by all occupants is not optional.

Dangers of Impaired Driving

Research also shows that during a typical weekend, an average of one teen dies per hour in a motor vehicle crash and 45% of these crashes involve alcohol.¹⁰ Make it clear to your teen that mixing alcohol or drugs and then driving is unacceptable.

Teens should never drive impaired or with someone who is.

Restrict Teen Passengers

Research shows that teen drivers, ages 16 and 17, driving with even one passenger are one and a half times more likely to be involved in a crash than when driving alone. With two teen passengers in the vehicle, the risk more than doubles. With three or more teen passengers, it's three to five times more likely that teens will be involved in a crash than if they were driving alone.¹¹ That's why parents should limit the number of passengers their teens drive with.



LEARNER'S PERMIT LEVEL

START: age 16
DURATION: 6 months
EDUCATION: • certified drivers education
• 50 or more hours of practice
• progressive challenges

START EARLY.

Set driving ground rules in the beginning to help your teen learn to drive and gain experience. In the early stages of driving, work with your teen to determine limits that everyone can live with. Slowly introduce him/her to high-risk driving situations such as bad weather, nighttime driving, heavy traffic, and highway driving.

The following guidelines are recommended by safety experts and have been proven to not only lessen the risks among teen drivers, but also to help them learn to drive more safely.

Some states have some or all of these guidelines in place. Other states have no system that allows new drivers to learn within a more controlled and safer structure. Even if your state's guidelines do not incorporate these restrictions, as a parent, you have the opportunity to use them in your home. The guidelines include three stages: the Learner's Permit level, the Intermediate Driver level, and the Full Driver level.

In the **Learner's Permit level**, it is recommended that you:

- ☐ Start your teen's adult-supervised driving practice no earlier than age 16
 - The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety recommends that parents wait until teens turn 16 before allowing them to get a learner's permit. While many states allow teens to get their learner's permit before age 16 in an effort to make them safer drivers, this practice may, in fact, increase risk. A study of fatal crashes of 15 year-olds in states where permits are allowed at this age found that three out of four beginners were driving without the required adult supervision.¹²
- ☐ Stay at this level at least six months
 - Making the Learner's Permit level last a minimum of six months allows you to have more supervised practice time with your teen and helps ensure better driving skills.
- ☐ Consider enrolling your teen in a certified driver education course
- ☐ AAA recommends at least 50 hours of practice driving time with your teen, including some practice at night and in progressively challenging circumstances, such as inclement weather.





INTERMEDIATE DRIVER LEVEL

START: age 16.5
DURATION: 18 months
LIMITS: • privileges end at 9 or 10 pm
• no. of teens w/o adults in car
• no cell phone use

In the **Intermediate Driver level**, it is recommended that you:

- ☐ Start this phase no earlier than age 16 and a half and keep your teen at this level until age 18
 - Research shows that driving inexperience and immaturity contribute to the high crash rate of young drivers.¹³ Both of these factors can be addressed by waiting to give teens full driving privileges.
- ☐ End driving privileges at 9 or 10 p.m., with exceptions made for driving to and from necessary work- and school-related activities
 - Research shows that 50% of fatalities that occur with a teen at the wheel happen after dark, even though most teen driving occurs during daylight hours. More than 75% of those nighttime crashes by 16- and 17-year-old drivers occur between 9 p.m. and midnight.¹⁴
- ☐ AAA recommends that for the first six months, teens should not drive with teen passengers. After that, limit teenage passengers when there is no adult supervision.
- ☐ Restrict cell phone use and other distractions while the vehicle is in motion
- ☐ Require that your teen keep a clean driving record throughout the Intermediate Driver level

Remember, you can require that your teen repeat a level if a rule is ever broken.



FULL DRIVER LEVEL

START: age 18, after first 2 levels
PRINCIPLES: follow rules learned in other levels

After successfully completing the first two levels, your teen graduates to the **Full Driver level**. At the Full Driver level, teens have complete driving privileges as provided by the law. However, all drivers at this level should follow the sound principles learned in the Learner's Permit and Intermediate Driver levels:

- Always wear seat belts and insist that passengers do the same
- Never drink or use drugs and then drive
- Limit distractions in the vehicle
- Never speed
- Obey all other rules of the road

At this level, parents should feel comfortable knowing that their teens are mature and experienced enough to drive safely. However, if you still feel uncomfortable with some aspects of your teen's driving, consider continuing some of the guidelines outlined in the Intermediate Driver level.

YOU HOLD THE KEYS!

Parents can and should set the rules. If at any time your teen driver violates the driving rules agreed upon or receives a traffic citation, you should consider waiting before moving him/her to the next level.

In addition, consider one of the following consequences:

- Suspend your teen's driving privileges for a predetermined period of time
- Restrict your teen to driving only to and from necessary work- or school-related activities

Also, do not be afraid to say no if you think your teen has not had enough driving experience or is not mature enough to move to the next driving level. Your main priority is teaching safe driving habits to help ensure that your teen will be as careful and protected as possible.

For more information on helping your teen learn to drive, contact your local AAA club for a copy of *Teaching Your Teen to Drive*.

CREATE A PARENT-TEEN CONTRACT



Create your own *Parent-Teen Road Rules Contract* based on the recommendations in this guide, which are proven to keep young drivers safe. (These recommendations are listed in the previous section.) We know parents need flexibility when they teach their teens to drive. However, be aware that if you relax the restrictions, the risk to your teen will increase. Together, you and your teen can fill out the *Parent-Teen Road Rules Contract* enclosed or check out the interactive version, which can be customized, at www.roadreadyteens.org.

Post the contract on the refrigerator or bulletin board, or file it away for safe keeping. Refer back to it. Then there's never any question about what's been agreed to.



THE AGREEMENT

Beginning on _____ (insert date), I, _____ (parent/guardian), agree to implement *Road Ready Teens* and work with _____ (teen's name) so he/she understands the risks he/she will face when he/she begins to drive. I agree to provide him/her with the necessary experience to become a better, safer driver. I, _____ (teen's name), agree to follow the *Road Ready Teens*'s guidelines established with my parents and if I break any provision, I understand that my parents will restrict my driving privileges.

- I will always wear my seat belt when driving and insist my passengers do the same. If I break this rule, I understand that my driving privileges will be revoked for a period of ____ (no. of days/months).
- I agree never to drink or use drugs and then drive, and I will never ride with someone who is impaired. If I break this rule, I understand my driving privileges will be revoked.

LEARNER'S PERMIT LEVEL

During the Learner's Permit level, I, _____ (teen's name), agree to the following:

- I will obey ALL traffic laws.
- I will maintain a clean driving record, including no traffic violations or crashes. I understand that violations may result in my parent(s) revoking my driving privileges.
- I will attend and complete a driver education course.
- I will only drive when a parent/guardian is in the vehicle.
- I will complete a total of at least 50 hours of regularly scheduled driving practice time with _____ (parent/guardian), which includes some practice at night and in progressively challenging circumstances, over the next six months.

During the Learner's Permit level, I, _____ (parent/guardian), agree to the following:

- I agree to supervise _____ (teen's name) during at least 50 hours of regularly scheduled driving practice time, including some practice at night and in progressively challenging circumstances, over the next six months.
- I will be a good driving role model for my teenager.
- I will enroll my teen in a certified driver education course.

INTERMEDIATE DRIVER LEVEL

Once _____ (teen's name) has successfully completed the Learner's Permit level, he/she will move to the Intermediate Driver level.

During the Intermediate Driver level, I, _____ (teen's name) I agree to the following:

- I will obey ALL traffic laws, and I will require anyone who rides with me to do the same.
- I will maintain a clean driving record.
- I understand that if I get a ticket or am involved in a crash, my parents have the right to revoke my driving privileges.
- I will drive with no more than ____ teen passengers in the vehicle (excluding siblings).
- I agree that I will not drive between the hours of ____ and ____, unless returning from necessary work- or school-related activities.
- I agree to call home if I am going to out past _____ (time).
- I will pull over to a safe place to make or return a call.
- I will keep music at a level that allows me to hear traffic, horns and sirens while I am driving.

During the Intermediate Driver level, I, _____ (parent/guardian), agree to the following:

- I will require that _____ (teen's name) obey all agreed upon responsibilities listed above.
- I agree to pick up _____ (teen's name) if he/she calls for a ride at any time, day or night.
- I promise to wait until the next day to discuss the situation.

COSTS ASSOCIATED

I, _____ (teen's name), agree to pay for tickets or moving violations.

(Parent/Guardian)

(Date)

(Teen)

(Date)



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Road Ready Teens was created by DaimlerChrysler with help from AAA, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and the National Safety Council (NSC) and is based on research presented at the NSC's Symposium on Graduated Driver Licensing.

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Log on to www.roadreadyteens.org to find links to your state's driving laws, research and statistics, and information on safer driving.



MADD
Activism | Victim Services | Education



Visit the following Web sites for additional information on driving safety and teen driving:

www.aaapublicaffairs.com • www.madd.org • www.nsc.org • www.iihs.org • www.ntsbgov • www.nhtsa.dot.gov

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